

MASONRY IN MANITOBA

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MASONIC EDUCATION

One of the first duties that an entered apprentice acknowledges is "to improve himself in Masonry."

We are frequently critical because not a few of our members truly and sincerely attempt to discharge this duty. Are we equally critical of the officers of the lodge who took part in the ceremony in which the duties of a Freemason were imparted to the young initiate?

In most every lodge in the jurisdiction we can find brethren pretending to be Masonic lights yet never read a Masonic publication or book. Some of them are experts in glibly repeating the phraseology of our "Work" but when asked to give an intelligent interpretation are tongue tied.

Masonic reading has always been an essential in the education of a Freemason and it is never too late to begin. Better, however, to make an early start.

Our library is a rich storehouse of all that is good in Masonic literature. These books are yours for the asking and the privilege of borrowing from its shelves is something you should cherish and use.

No man's education is ever finished. The successful man with a definite purpose makes it his business and his responsibility to read books relating to that purpose and thus acquire knowledge from the experience of other men.

We cannot stop studying the day we finish our formal schooling. Progress in life and in business can only be had by each man realizing that education is progressive and we make additions to what we already have by what we learn day after day.

Random reading will undoubtedly bring pleasant relaxation but don't be content with the exciting detective story. Get down to a bit of the heavier stuff connected with your business or profession and remember there is much to learn about the Craft. You will undoubtedly get some real pleasure if you make it a habit to read and study the works of our Masonic writers.

If you have been honored by your lodge this year and occupy the office of Worshipful Master then you owe it to yourself and to the members who selected you to this high and responsible position to improve yourself in Freemasonry.

We can think of no better medium by which improvement can come than the shelves of your own library in the Masonic Temple at Winnipeg.

THE MASTER'S ASSISTANT

Since our last issue the Committee on Research and Education has mailed to every Worshipful Master in the Jurisdiction a copy of this little volume.

As indicated on the fly leaf the book is to remain the property of the lodge and should be handed on by the Worshipful Master to his successor when elected.

The contents will be found useful in a general sense but must not be confounded with the Constitution of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba which is the law of the jurisdiction. It will be found that certain points differ from the usage to be found in Manitoba—in such cases then our own book of regulations must prevail.

We hope this book will prove helpful to the brethren who have been elected to rule and govern the lodges in this Province.

OUR FIRST MEMBERS

Among the treasured relics of the pioneer days is the Volume of the Sacred Law presented to old Northern Light Lodge of Red River Settlement days by Archdeacon James Hunter. This is now in the possession of Lisgar Lodge No. 2 Selkirk. On the fly leaf is inscribed the message of presentation.

Who was Archdeacon Hunter? He was one of the first men initiated into Freemasonry in the territory which later became the Province of Manitoba.

Brother Hunter came from London in 1844 and took charge of The Pas Mission which had been opened about four years. He found a small log house roofed with bark for a residence and set to work to build suitable quarters. Lumber was cut from the logs with a whip-saw and a house described as being fifty by thirty feet with walls thirteen and a half feet high; kitchen forty-two by sixteen with lofts above, was erected.

Mr. Hunter, so we are told, experimented with farming operations and he is credited with having cattle, horses, pigs and sheep, and sowed wheat, barley, potatoes and garden seeds.

Brother Hunter went back to England on furlough in 1854 and on his return was appointed to St. Andrews, Red River. In 1859 he volunteered to make a journey of exploration into the far north. He spent a winter in the Mackenzie River Country and as a result missions were opened in that district. He was the pioneer Anglican Missionary in that Northern Territory. He returned to England after some twenty years vigorous work on behalf of his Church and before leaving Red River his brethren presented him with the Jewel of the Chaplains office in appreciation of his loyalty and interest in the young lodge.

Besides his work of building and evangelizing in our Northern regions Brother Hunter did considerable translating. He pro-

vided the Indians with the Prayer Book, the Hymn Book and portions of the Bible in Cree.

We honor this pioneer brother of the Pioneer Masonic Lodge of Manitoba.

THE TRESTLEBOARD OF FRIENDSHIP

We are taking our readers on a visit to the library this month. For a long long time many of the volumes on our shelves have brought light and inspiration to those who had the desire to seek knowledge from the writings of other gifted craftsmen.

The story of the old country preacher, who, in the early days of radio, was drafted to broadcast a service has a warm place in my heart.

"I take my text," he began clearly, "from the fourteenth chapter of John, the thirty-fourth verse; 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another' "—Then with calm simplicity he began his sermon.

He talked as he would have talked from the pulpit of the church where he had met his friends and neighbours for so many years. There was no conscious striving for effect, no endeavor for fine phrasing or eloquent passages. Yet the message was rich in the beauty of lovely thoughts clothed in simple language. It was a plea for friendship among men, for toleration and for understanding.

"We are all builders," said the old man, "working on to the unseen Temple. Sometimes our tools are different. I use one, you another. Your trowel may not be an exact duplicate of mine, yet who can say it is not as well shaped to spread the cement of brotherly love.

"Shall we desert our labors and leave the Temple unfinished while we quarrel over the merits of our tools? Which, think you, is more important, the tools which a man uses or the work he does?

"It may be that your square, your plumb or level, are suited to your hands but not to mine. My compasses may have been handed down to me from my father who was a builder before me. Must we both buy our working tools at the same counter before we can labor side by side?"

So, with the simple symbols of the most ancient of all crafts, he pleaded for less thought of creed and more of love.

"I am an old, old man," he said in closing. "Yet in all the years of my life I have never seen hatred bring happiness; I never knew bigotry to draw a man closer to his own God: I have never found that intolerance made smoother or easier, the road to happiness."

It was a great sermon, if great sermons are measured in terms of eloquence. Yet to thousands who listened that afternoon it carried the conviction that it came from the heart of one who loved his neighbour as himself and who found love good.

At the conclusion the voice of the unseen speaker repeated the simple benediction, "The Lord watch you and keep you and cause His face to shine upon you—Amen."

There were those who felt they had been in the presence of a shining soul, and they talked in muted voices of its beauty.

Have you, my brother, read the charming pages of "The Lodge in Friendship Village"? If not then you have a rare Masonic treat waiting and you can borrow a copy of this book from the Librarian of your own Masonic Library.

DISCIPLINE

There seems to be a doubt as to what a lodge can do when one of the officers is unworthy to be continued in office. In some quarters the belief is held that having been installed he shall continue in office until his successor shall have been installed.

The Constitution leaves no doubt as to what action can be taken should such an unfortunate situation arise.

Let us quote section 134 which reads thus: "Any officer of a Lodge, except the Master, may be dismissed from office at any regular meeting for cause deemed sufficient by a majority of the members present. Notice of a resolution to this effect shall have been stated in the summons for the meeting. He may be reinstated, after notice, at any subsequent regular meeting by a resolution supported by two-thirds of the members present."

AREA MEETINGS

Some time ago we read a comment on Freemasonry by an eminent brother in the course of which he said "each has something to give to, and something to learn from, the other."

No better words could be used in connection with the purpose of the area meetings held each spring. The preliminary programmes now under consideration for the 1948 meetings indicate that the brethren who attend will undoubtedly learn as well as receive something and of course by his presence will make his contribution to the success of our work.

Mark your calendars right away with the date and place of meeting and if within reasonable distance we suggest you make it a definite engagement because it will be truly worth your while.

On 5th May, a meeting will be held at Souris; on 13th May, another at Pilot Mound, while tentatively (as we write this) the brethren at Gladstone will be hosts on 19th May.

Your lodge secretary, if you are adjacent to any of the three towns mentioned, will have full information, so direct any enquiry to that officer.

It is intended that each meeting will begin at 6 p.m. with the evening meal; the business will commence in the lodge room at 8 p.m. and the hour of adjournment will not be late.

Every member of the craft residing within hail will be welcome. Remember the hour and don't contribute to late hours by coming late.

THE QUARRIES

In any reference in Masonic Ritual to the building of "Solomon's Temple" it has always been assumed that the stone was obtained from "The Quarries of Lebanon," and emphasis is laid on the fact that although it was prepared so far from the site of the building, the remarkable accuracy with which each piece fitted to the next was proof of the excellent workmanship of those responsible.

About a hundred years ago a discovery was made that proves that the stone for the temple did not come from Lebanon at all.

In his most interesting book, "In the Steps of the Master," Mr. H. V. Morton gives a full account of the discovery of the ancient quarries, and his description is so excellent that I quote him very fully.

"A man named Barclay was walking around the walls of Jerusalem with his dog and gun. When he came to the Damascus Gate he discovered that the dog was missing. He whistled, but the animal did not appear. Turning back, he saw the dog crawling out apparently from beneath the city walls, where he had evidently made a find. He stood barking, asking his master to come and look at his discovery. When Barclay went over, he found that bushes, shrubs and the debris of centuries concealed the opening to a cavern which ran under the wall and beneath the city. Such a discovery in Jerusalem fires the imagination and encourages the wildest rumors. The Arabs believe to this day that in such a cavern the gold and silver treasures of Solomon, the Ark of the Covenant and the vessels used in the Temple sacrifices, lie waiting to be found. I have heard several men, whose opinions claim respect and attention, say that they believe the Ark of the the Covenant is hidden somewhere in the mysterious and quite unknown underworld of the Temple area. So Barclay wisely said nothing, and returning on the following day with a search party, widened the small hole into which his dog had jumped, and entered the cavern. The torches of the search party lit up a weird and terrifying scene. The explorers stood in a snow-white cavern, so large that its extremity was hidden in darkness; the torch-light was not powerful enough to penetrate the

end of the cavern. It was an immense excavation that ran on and on beneath the streets of the Old City. It was soon realized that they had discovered Solomon's Quarries—called by Josephus "Royal Quarries"—the quarries which, lost for nearly twenty centuries, had provided the stone for Solomon's Temple about nine hundred years before Christ."

Mr. Morton found these quarries one of the most interesting sights in Jerusalem. He says that every Freemason who visits Jerusalem is aware of them, and that brethren of the Craft from all parts of the world hold Lodge meetings in them at night (when they will not be seen or disturbed) "*because they hold the theory that the builders of the Temple were the first Freemason.*"

"An Arab, working in the patch of sunlight that penetrates the cave, was making paperweights and gavels to be marked with Masonic emblems and working tools. These are bought by visiting brethren and are to be found all over the world. Stones from the quarries are also exported, to become foundation stones for Masonic buildings.

"On every hand I noticed signs of workmen, with a feeling of awe and bewilderment, a feeling that I was dropping through the very floor of time. I knew, that these workmen had been dead for nearly three thousand years. Yet the marks made by the Phoenician stonecutters when Solomon was king of Jerusalem, were as clean, as sharp and, apparently as recent, as the marks a man sees in the Portland quarries of today. The workmen had cut niches in the walls for their lamps, and it all seemed so new, so modern, that I had the odd feeling that it was lunch hour during the building of the Temple, and at any moment I might hear the returning feet of Solomon's quarrymen."

Mr. Morton propped his lantern on a ledge of rock, and then and there read the account given in the Bible of the building of the Temple. For the first time he understood the meaning of a verse which has puzzled so many people; Verse 7 in the 6th Chapter of the First Book of Kings says "... and the House, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither; so there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the House while it was in building."

It has always been supposed that this meant that the quarries were in some distant part of the Land of Israel; but why was the obvious fact stressed that quarrying carried on far off could not be heard in the Temple? Obviously the point of the verse is that "the stone with which Solomon built his Temple came almost from beneath the Temple, yet not a soul heard the cutting of the stone."

(R. W. Bro. L. A. Cresset-Kent)